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# Economic and Social Council

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**Commission on the Status of Women**
**Forty-eighth session**
1-12 March 2004
Item 3 (c) (i) of the provisional agenda*
**Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in the critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: the role of men and boys in achieving gender equality**

## Statement submitted by Rotary International, a non-governmental organization in general consultative status with the Economic and Social Council

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31 of 25 July 1996.

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* E/CN.6/2004/1.

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The 1.2 million members of Rotary in 166 countries are actively meeting the goals of the 48th Commission on the Status of Women. Through Rotary projects, men are introduced to and involved in the issues women face in developed and developing countries. Rotary also offers equal access to its clubs, projects, youth exchange, scholarships and group study exchange programs.

Rotary's Rotaract (ages 18-30) and Interact (ages 14-18) clubs involve men and boys in developing projects that promote gender equality. And, because Rotary includes men and women, projects that assist women are planned by both genders. For example, both male and female members of the Rotary Club of Winnetka, Illinois, USA and the Uganda Agency for Development are helping women in Uganda by providing micro-credit loans. The loans are for basic business practices such as small shops and sewing centers.

Anthony Kambich, Rotary member and chairman of the Ugandan project, states, "The willingness of the women to now assist each other through counsel and financial support has helped break the dependence on men who formerly preyed upon them, forcing women into a life of prostitution, dependence, and eventually death caused by HIV/AIDS."

The Ugandan micro-credit loans are but one of many Rotary projects focused on empowering women toward greater self-sufficiency — and leadership. In 2002, Rotary established the Rotary Centers for International Studies in peace and conflict resolution. Through partnerships with seven prestigious universities around the world, the Rotary Centers advance the field of peace issues and diplomacy among the next generation of local and global leaders. Women have excelled at the opportunity. Today, more women than men have applied and been selected for the scholarships. The 2002-2004 scholar class has 58 percent women while the 2003-2005 scholar class includes 44 women out of 67 scholars. Rotary's support ensures that women from some 60 countries will be future leaders committed to peace.

Will it be BENEFICIAL for all concerned? This is one of four questions Rotary members ask themselves before initiating any project or program. Creating a world where everyone has an opportunity to be safe, economically independent, and educated is Rotary's mission. Rotary clubs on every continent are developing projects that benefit each individual: men, women, boys and girls. Filipino Rotary members, for example, are teaching young adults new technological advances through a basic electronics course. The project also assists participants in finding jobs after the course's completion.

Rotary will continue to encourage members to develop projects to address the needs of women in their communities, and provide women access to education, economic and social development, and healthcare. Rotary works to ensure that its programs and projects truly benefit all the world's citizens.

Rotary is an organization of business and professional leaders united worldwide who provide humanitarian service, and help build goodwill and peace in the world. There are approximately 1.2 million Rotary members in more than 31,000 Rotary clubs in 166 countries.